



Making the invisible visible

Key Words

Academic literacy, relationship building, Digital literacy, Information literacy

Abstract

Library and Learning Services (LLS), Division of Information Services, Griffith University accommodates a centralised academic library, which is undergoing changes in focus toward strategic, targeted and scalable services. Professional roles within LLS, have increasingly moved toward intricate collaborations and partnerships with academic groups and student support services at all program levels (Oakleaf, 2015). During 2014, the Pro Vice Chancellor (Information Services) requested the development of an integrated academic skills model (the Academic Skills Model), which underpinned the remit of LLS professionals and supported the University's learning and teaching goals. Further, such a model could serve other purposes including targeted delivery of information, academic, and digital literacies through embedded workshops (Bowles-Terry, 2012; Munn, Coutts, Knopke, Grant and Barlett, 2016). Additionally, it was hoped the model would result in better data gathering around the quality of skill development and the impact of service delivery to student outcomes. The model's development and pilot have been steered through an arduous and wobbly path of administration, organisational restructuring, multiple objectives and traditional work models. The Academic Skills Model (ASM) is a quality framework that supports the development of academic (Harper, 2011), information (Association of College & Research Libraries, 2015) and digital literacies (JISC, 2015; Oliver & Towers, 2000) within programs of study, and particularly aligned to assessment items. The ASM enables library and learning specialists to visually align workshop content with Griffith University's Graduate Attributes (Griffith University Academic Committee, 2016) as well as academic, community and corporate discourse. AALLians know all too well the invisibility of the work we do in our institutions and the need for a discipline specific focus (Lea & Street, 1998). The ASM provides the means to make the invisible work of professional staff visible to academic partners. The Model guides conversations between Learning Advisers, Librarians, Digital Capability Advisers and academic staff to enable better focussed teaching and student learning outcomes. The ASM was collaboratively developed in consultation with professional staff within Library & Learning Services. A series of training sessions were conducted to ensure that LLS professional staff understood the purpose of the tool and how to use it in their conversations. An initial trial was conducted to identify any inconsistencies or sections of the tool requiring further clarification and to develop the process with academic staff. At the commencement of trimester 1, 2017 the ASM was rolled out more broadly across the University's academic programs by LLS professional staff. The impact of using the ASM with academic staff meetings is being assessed by collecting experiences of professional staff. Preliminary data suggests that the ASM assists academics to visualise literacies in their courses, become cognisant of the type of language they use in assessments and how LLS professional services can support students' and their academic staff learning journeys (Lizzio, 2006; Seidman, 2005; Tinto, 2006). The ASM is achieving its goals of building and developing partnerships (Wilson et al., 2014) across the university through the shared ownership of helping students succeed.

References

- Association of College & Research Libraries. (2015). Framework for Information Literacy for Higher Education. Retrieved from <http://www.ala.org/acrl/standards/ilframework> Bowles-
- Terry, M. (2012). Library instruction and academic success: A mixed-methods assessment of a library instruction program. *Evidence Based Library and Information Practice*, 7(1), 82-95.
- Griffith University Academic Committee. (2016). The Griffith Graduate Policy (document 2016/7006051). Retrieved from [http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/The Griffith Graduate.pdf](http://policies.griffith.edu.au/pdf/The%20Griffith%20Graduate.pdf)
- Harper, R. (2011). Academic Literacy Development Framework, University of Canberra.
- JISC, (2015). Digital literacies development framework, Digital Literacies Materials, Retrieved from [http://technologyenhancedlearning.net/files/2010/10/Literacies -development- framework.pdf](http://technologyenhancedlearning.net/files/2010/10/Literacies-development-framework.pdf)
- Lea, M. R., & Street, B. V. (1998). Student writing in higher education: An academic literacies approach. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), 157-172. doi:10.1080/03075079812331380364
- Lizzio, A. (2006). Designing an orientation and transition strategy for commencing students. A conceptual summary of research and practice. Paper presented at First Year Experience Project, Brisbane, Australia: Griffith University.
- Maldoni, A. (2016). A cross-disciplinary approach to embedding: A pedagogy for developing academic literacies. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 11(1), A104-A124.
- Munn, J., Coutts, R., Knopke, J., Grant, A., and Barlett, E. (2016). The academic skill needs and competency of first year health science students: views of educators. *Journal of Academic Language and Learning*, 10(2), A32-A47.
- Oakleaf, M. (2015). The Library's Contribution to Student Learning: Inspirations and Aspirations. *College and Research Libraries*, 76(3). Retrieved from <http://meganoakleaf.info/framework.pdf>
- Oliver, R. & Towers S. (2000). Benchmarking ICT Literacy in Tertiary Learning Settings. Edith Cowan University. ASCIILITE Conference.
- Seidman, A. (2005). Ed. College student retention: formula for student success. American Council on Education/Praeger Series in Higher Education Series. Praeger Publishers, Westport, United States of America. p. 67.
- Tinto, V. (2006). Research and practice of student retention: What next? *Journal of college student retention: Research, theory & practice*, 8(1), 1-19.
- Wilson, K., Murphy, K. A., Pearson, A. G., Wallace, B. M., Reher, V. G. S., & Buys, N. (2014). Understanding the early transition needs of diverse commencing university students in a health faculty: informing effective intervention practices. *Studies in Higher Education (Dorchester-on-Thames)*, 1-18.